



# City of Seattle

Department of Construction & Inspections

Nathan Torgelson, Director

DESIGN  
REVIEW

## EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number:	3025946
Address:	225 Roy Street
Applicant:	Maria Barrientos
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday, April 05, 2017
Board Members Present:	Homero Nishiwaki (Chair) Dawn Bushnaq (Substitute) Joseph Hurley (Substitute) Peter Krech (Substitute)
Board Members Absent:	Boyd Pickrell Katie Idziorek Janet Stephenson
SDCI Staff Present:	Lindsay King

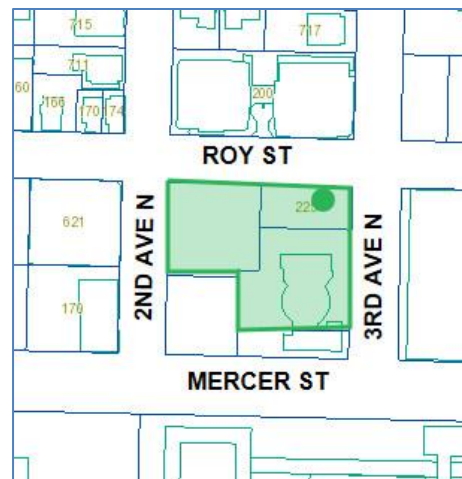
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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-40)

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3-40  
(South) NC3-85  
(East) NC3-40  
(West) NC3-40

Lot Area: approximately 44,420 sq. ft.



**Current Development:**

The subject site is located on the northwest half of a block bound by Mercer Street to the south, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to the west, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to the east, and Roy Street to the north. The subject lot and lots to the north, east and west are all currently zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC3-40). Lots to the south, across Mercer Street, are zoned NC3-85. The site contains three parcels with an existing commercial building and surface parking lot. The site contains approximately 13 feet of grade change from the southeast corner, the low point of the site, to the northwest corner, the high point of the site. To the south, along the only shared property line, are existing City of Seattle properties.

The subject lot is currently being considered for a City initiated rezone. The subject lot and all adjacent lots are proposed to be rezoned to Seattle Mixed (SM-85). The project proposal is currently designed to the pending rezone legislation.

**Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:**

This neighborhood, located within the Uptown Urban Center, includes multifamily housing, retail and office uses, community services, restaurants, the Seattle Center, parking, and shopping. Mercer Street is a principal arterial street connecting Queen Anne to I-5. Roy Street is also a principal arterial street and is the principal commercial corridor adjacent to the site. Many 1-4 story mixed use structure and single use commercial structures are located along the corridor. To the west is an existing brick residential structure. Directly south of the subject lot is the Seattle Center. To the east is the Seattle Center parking garage. The subject site is separate from Mercer Street by two City of Seattle properties. Within walking distance from the site services include restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, and parks.

**Access:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Roy Street.

**Environmentally Critical Areas:**

No Environmentally Critical Areas have been identified on site.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Design Review Early Design Guidance application proposing an eight-story building containing 320 residential units and 9,619 sq. ft. of retail space. Parking for 225 vehicles to be located below grade. Project relies on a rezone to the Seattle Mixed zone with an 85' height limit (SM-85). Uptown preliminary rezone recommendation FEIS and associated legislation is available.

The design packet includes information presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number at this website:

<http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/aboutus/news/events/DesignReview/SearchPastReviews/default.aspx>

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at SDCl:

**Mailing**    **Public Resource Center**  
**Address:** 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000  
              P.O. Box 34019  
              Seattle, WA 98124-4019

**Email:**    [PRC@seattle.gov](mailto:PRC@seattle.gov)

<b>FINAL EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 5, 2017</b>
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## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following public comments were offered at this meeting:

- Would like to see the two buildings treated distinctly to create more visual interest.
- Supported the proposed right-of-way design for 2nd Avenue. Would like to see more generous sidewalks provided along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- Questioned whether public parking will stay on 2nd and 3rd Avenue.
- Noted the transition from 85-foot to the Lowrise Three zone to the north required significant attention. Would like to see upper level setbacks on Roy facing the south slope of Queen Anne.
- Expressed concern regarding shadow and privacy impacts to residential units across Roy Street.
- Noted that this building will set a precedent for future projects along Roy Street. Felt an upper level setback should be provided since the building is significantly higher than existing projects.
- Expressed concern that this will be the only building of this scale in the neighborhood. Felt building should be limited to 4 or 5 stories.
- Felt the building should do more to fit into the existing community and context.
- Expressed concern regarding the contemporary, dark material application. Would like to see a lighter material treatment.
- Expressed concern regarding the loss of middle income housing in the neighborhood.
- Noted the public plaza along Mercer Street will provide a significant amenity to both the neighborhood and theatre district.
- Expressed concern that the plaza would not feel public. Would like to see the grade treated in a way to provide an openness that feels welcoming to the public.
- Noted that Seattle Center has purview over the plaza design.

SDCI staff also summarized design related comments received in writing prior to the meeting:

- Expressed concern regarding the increased height proposed for the site.

One purpose of the design review process is for the Board and City to receive comments from the public that help to identify feedback and concerns about the site and design concept, identify applicable citywide and neighborhood design guidelines of highest priority to the site and explore conceptual design, siting alternatives and eventual architectural design. Concerns with off-street parking are reviewed as part of the environmental review conducted by SDCI and

are not part of this review. Neither SDCI nor the Board have purview over the unit income of proposed units.

All public comments submitted in writing for this project can be viewed using the following link and entering the project number: <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/edms/>

## **PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS**

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

- 1. Massing.** The Board provided unanimous support for the applicant's preferred massing Option IV. Option IV provides many massing benefits including a through-block connection open to the sky, a courtyard with generous proportions, reduced building height along the south façade allowing light into the central courtyard, and site design and massing connection to the Seattle Center. The Board heard public comment and discussed whether the massing provided an appropriate response to Roy Street and the zone transition to the north. Ultimately, the Board agreed that the required zoning upper level setback would create an awkward proportion for the structure. A strong street wall may be appropriate for the existing context, if executed in an exceptional way consistent the precedent images.
  - a) At the Recommendation stage, the Board requested a detailed study of the precedent images provided at the EDG meeting, conveying how each brick street wall constitutes a great composition. (CS2-A, CS3-A)
  - b) The Board expressed concern that the proportion of a 225-foot long façade with 85-foot height would be inappropriate scale along Roy Street. The Board agreed with public comment that the two buildings, individually, offered better proportions, and supported a separate treatment for each building to break down the scale of the development and provide a high-quality, resolved design. (CS2-C, CS3-A, DC2, DC4-A)
  - c) At the Recommendation stage, the Board echoed public concerns and requested a range of studies demonstrating how Buildings A and B can respond to existing massing and character context along Roy Street. The Board suggested the following treatments for study: variation on upper level setback for one or both buildings, vertical vs. horizontal expression, variation on the architectural composition. (CS2-A, CS3-A)
  - d) At the Recommendation stage, the Board would like to see a shadow impact analysis along Roy Street with and without an upper level setback. (CS2-D)
  - e) The revised Roy façade must demonstrate how the proportion and scale of the structure, fenestration, architectural detailing, and high quality material treatment incorporate concepts from the precedent images and the Roy Street context study. (CS2, CS3-A, DC2, DC4).
- 2. Architectural Concept.** The Board supported the geode architectural concept but questioned the successful execution of the concept. The Board noted public comments about the neighborhood character and discussed the neighborhood context of the site: beautiful

masonry facing Queen Anne and the funky fun of the Seattle Center. The Board supported loosening the concept to provide a better response to Roy Street and tightening the concept in other areas of the building. Overall, the Board supported a simplification of the four façade treatments.

- a) The Board noted that the 3rd Avenue gasket and commercial material step needed further resolution. The Board noted that if the gasket progresses within the design, it must have a stronger expression. (DC2, DC4)
- b) The Board applauded the concept of the beacon element along Mercer Street as an appropriate response to the Seattle Center, but felt the expression should be stronger. (CS2-A)
- c) The Board noted that the Mercer Street ground-level, faceted commercial wall created a strength and energy that could inform the upper levels of the structure. (CS2-A)
- d) At the Recommendation stage, the Board would like to see details of the material, fenestration, and architectural detailing along each façade. The Board noted that the interior facades will be visible until the City of Seattle develops the vacant lot. (CS2-A, DC2-B, DC4)

**3. Streetscape.** The Board applauded the detailed context analysis and agreed that the project provided a strong site design informed by the site's key relationships. The Board strongly supported the open to the sky through block passage from lower Queen Anne to the Seattle Center. The Board also supported the easement between the subject lot and the City of Seattle property. The Board provided the following guidance to further evolve the site design.

- a) Develop the through block to feel public, welcoming and provide a sense of exploration.
  - i. The Board questioned the need to provide overhead weather protection between Buildings A and B. The Board suggested the design team consider ways to provide a sense of containment while maintaining a sense of openness between the buildings. (PL1-I-i)
  - ii. Define the intermediate space with a visual terminus when a user cannot see from end to end in the through block. Use features guide users through the space and provide sense of discovery. (PL1-I, PL2-D)
  - iii. At the Recommendation stage, provide a conceptual wayfinding plan. (PL2-D)
  - iv. Maximize transparency, at ground level, on north/south through block entrances to increase the visual access to the central courtyard. (DC1-A, PL1-I, PL2-D, PL2-I)
  - v. The Board expressed support for the courtyard's layered landscaping and overlook seating. The Board applauded the concept of a quiet refuge in the urban context. (PL1-I)
  - vi. At the Recommendation stage, the Board acknowledged public comment and requested clarity on the interim condition adjacent to the vacant City of Seattle parcel (PI1-I)
- b) Develop the public plaza along Mercer Street to feel public and welcoming.

- i. The Board applauded how the site design manages the substantial grade change along Mercer Street. The design allows multiple paths between the site and the right-of-way, without stairs. At the Recommendation stage, the Board would like to see how the ‘shoulders’ at the corner create a space that feels generous for the public. (PL1, PL2-A, PL2-D, PL2-II)
  - ii. The Board noted that the site slope should be treated as a gift, allowing opportunities for seating to view the theatrical performance of people moving around and through the site. (PL1, PL2-A, PL2-D, PL2-II)
- c) Further develop the ground plan around Building A to provide a semiprivate transition for ground floor residential units.
  - i. The Board supported the proposed residential stoops along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. At the Recommendation stage, the Board requested a composite hardscape/landscape plan and site section showing the treatment of the space between the unit and the sidewalk to provide a generous semi-private residential transition. (PL3-B)
  - ii. Along the through block, and the south easement, demonstrate a thoughtful treatment of the site lines between the units and the public space. Consider way to layer quality materials to allow residential privacy while maintaining a comfortable public passage through the space. (PL3-B)
- d) Develop Roy Street to provide a welcome introduction to the through block and respond to the existing commercial character.
  - i. The Board expressed support for a highly transparent residential lobby and public coffee shop in Building B; both features will provide visual access and invite user into the courtyard space. (DC1-A, PL1-I, PL2-D, PL2-I)
  - ii. At the Recommendation stage the Board requested further detail on the treatment of the commercial, live work uses, and residential lobby on Roy Street. The Board expressed support for the commercial scale and materiality represented within the EDG packet renderings on page 43 and 51. (CS2-I, PL3-II, DC1-A)
- e) The Board expressed support for the combined driveway access on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, but felt the stepped commercial façade and upper level architectural concept needed further resolution. (DC2-B, DC4-A)

#### **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

The Board’s recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based on the departure’s potential to help the project better meet these design guidelines priorities and achieve a better overall project design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board’s recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

1. **Upper Level Setback (SMC 23.48.735 A):** The Code requires an upper level setback for structures greater than 45 feet in height. The required setback is 1-foot for every 2-feet in height to maximum of 15 feet. The applicant does not propose a setback along Roy Street.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board indicated early support for a setback departure request along Roy Street. The Board agreed that the zoning code upper level setback creates an awkward proportion for the structure. A strong street wall may be appropriate for the existing context, if executed in an exceptional way consistent the precedent images. The Board provided guidance that additional study of an appropriate response to Roy Street should be provided at the Recommendation stage. The Board acknowledged that a variety of treatments may be used to provide a contextual response and break down the scale of the development. The revised proposal must demonstrate the how the design concept provides a building better meeting the intent of City adopted Design Guidelines CS2-A-D Urban Pattern and Form, DC2-A Reducing Perceived Mass, DC2-B Architectural and Façade Composition, and DC4-A Exterior Finish Materials.

2. **Commercial Standards (SMC 23.48.040 B2b1):** The Code requires commercial spaces to have a minimum 13 feet floor to floor height and minimum 30 feet in depth. The applicant proposes 2 live work units along Roy Street that will be less than 30-feet deep with a minimum floor to floor height less than 13 feet.

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the Board indicated early support for the departure request. At the Recommendation Stage the Board requested additional details regarding the treatment of the commercial storefront on Roy Street in response to the guidance provided. Ultimately, the design will need to demonstrate the live work unit interior programming will provide a viable commercial storefront along Roy Street better meeting the intent of City adopted design guidelines PL3-ii Active, Customer-oriented Retail Storefronts.

## DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

### CONTEXT & SITE

**CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.**

#### **CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood**

**CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence:** Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

#### **CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces**

**CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space:** Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

**CS2-C Relationship to the Block**

**CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites:** Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

**CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale**

**CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning:** Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

**CS2-D-4. Massing Choices:** Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

**CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites:** Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics**

**CS2-I-i. Pedestrian Character:** Throughout Uptown new developments should, to the extent possible, be sited to further contribute to the neighborhood's pedestrian character.

**CS2-III Corner Lots**

**CS2-III-i. Addressing the Corner:** Generally, buildings within Uptown should meet the corner and not be set back. Building designs and treatments as well as any open space areas should address the corner and promote activity. Corner entrances are strongly encouraged, where feasible.

**CS2-III-ii. Corner Features:** Corner lots are often desirable locations for small publicly-accessible plazas, turrets, clock towers, art, and other special features. Design corner retail entries to not disrupt access to residential uses above.

**CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.**

**CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes**

**CS3-A-1. Fitting Old and New Together:** Create compatibility between new projects, and existing architectural context, including historic and modern designs, through building articulation, scale and proportion, roof forms, detailing, fenestration, and/or the use of complementary materials.

**CS3-A-2. Contemporary Design:** Explore how contemporary designs can contribute to the development of attractive new forms and architectural styles; as expressed through use of new materials or other means.

**CS3-A-3. Established Neighborhoods:** In existing neighborhoods with a well-defined architectural character, site, and design new structures to complement or be compatible with the architectural style and siting patterns of neighborhood buildings.

**PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.**

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL1-I Streetscape Compatibility**

**PL1-I-i. Streetscape Continuity:** Site outdoor spaces in accordance with the location and scale of adjacent streets, buildings, and uses. For example, an on-site plaza should not unduly interrupt the retail continuity of a street.

**PL1-I-ii. Plaza Location:** Locate plazas intended for public use at or near grade to promote both a physical and visual connection to the street. Special paving materials, landscaping, and other elements can be used to provide a clear definition between the public and private realms.

**PL1-I-iii. Open Space Scale/Definition:** Define outdoor spaces through a combination of building and landscaping, and discourage oversized spaces that lack containment.

**PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.**

**PL2-A Accessibility**

**PL2-A-1. Access for All:** Provide access for people of all abilities in a manner that is fully integrated into the project design. Design entries and other primary access points such that all visitors can be greeted and welcomed through the front door.

**PL2-A-2. Access Challenges:** Add features to assist pedestrians in navigating sloped sites, long blocks, or other challenges.

**PL2-D Wayfinding**

**PL2-D-1. Design as Wayfinding:** Use design features as a means of wayfinding wherever possible.

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL2-I Entrances Visible from the Street**

**PL2-I-i. Prominent Entrances:** Throughout Uptown, major entrances to developments should be prominent. The use of distinctive designs with historical references is strongly encouraged. Design, detailing, materials and landscaping may all be employed to this end. Building addresses and names (if applicable) should be located at entrances, tastefully crafted.

**PL2-II Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances**

**PL2-II-v. Seattle Center Street Activation:** In the Uptown Urban and Heart of Uptown character areas, encourage Seattle Center campus redevelopment along its boundaries to either open vistas from Uptown into Seattle Center or to provide activation for the street.

**PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.**

**PL3-B Residential Edges**

**PL3-B-1. Security and Privacy:** Provide security and privacy for residential buildings through the use of a buffer or semi-private space between the development and the street or neighboring buildings.

***Uptown Supplemental Guidance:***

**PL3-I Human Activity**

**PL3-I-i. Active, Customer-oriented Retail Storefronts:** A top priority within the Heart of Uptown character area is to promote active, customer-oriented retail storefronts at street level. The ground floor of buildings in this character area should help create the most active and vibrant street environment in Uptown. A variety of narrower store-front shops are preferred to wide continuous single storefronts.

**PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.**

**PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists**

**PL4-B-1. Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

**PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

**PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

**DESIGN CONCEPT**

**DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.**

**DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses**

**DC1-A-4. Views and Connections:** Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

**DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.**

**DC2-A Massing**

**DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

**DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition**

**DC2-B-1. Façade Composition:** Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

**DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.**

**DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes**

**DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials:** Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **BOARD DIRECTION**

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.